

**ARIZONA VETERANS' SERVICE ADVISORY COMMISSION**  
**4141 N. 3rd St., Phoenix, AZ 85012**  
**Thursday – May 8, 2008**

**M I N U T E S**

**Call to Order** - Chairman Dingwall opened the meeting at 10:00 a.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Present**

Advisory Commissioners

Tom Dingwall, Chairman  
Kenneth Yamanouchi, Vice Chairman  
Gary Fredericks

Arizona Department of Veterans' Services

Richard G. Maxon, Director  
Mike Klier, Deputy Director  
Dave Hampton, Public Information

Officer

Phillip Quochoytewa

Stella Cook, Executive Assistant to the

Director

Webb Ellis  
Larry McKim  
Linda Fulkerson

Lee Borgen, Veterans' Benefits Counselor  
Donna Adams, Development Specialist

**Absent**

Tom Heaney  
Bill Lunsford

No guests were in attendance.

**Minutes of the previous meeting** – The minutes of April 12, 2008 were approved as written by a motion from Commissioner McKim, seconded by Linda Fulkerson, and carried.

**Correspondence** – Copies of a letter from Commissioner Quochoytewa were distributed. Commissioner Quochoytewa suggested that the regional meetings be discontinued and the Advisory Commission meetings be held quarterly rather than monthly, and difficulty with travel claims

Discussion: Commissioner Fredricks stated he is not in favor of decreasing outreach, but to work more efficiently. Chairman Dingwall advised that quarterly meetings result in a loss of continuity. Vice Chairman Yamanouchi suggested that the number of guests in attendance at a regional meeting has little bearing on the value of the meeting, but it is essential to follow up on the concerns raised by the public at the meetings. Commissioner Fredricks recommended that data be collected to create a policy for addressing the concerns from the rural area meetings.

Further discussion about the April 12th meeting in Springerville was held. Director Maxon advised that the cost of travel for the outreach meetings is not a great amount, but suggested investigating dividing the Commission by area and visiting the regions with smaller groups or sub-committees. Chairman Dingwall advised that he will suggest the matter be addressed by the Commission with the new members after the beginning of the new term.

Thank you letters were sent to those who helped facilitate the Commission meeting in Springerville.

**Agency Announcements and Updates**

ADVS Director Richard G. Maxon

- ADVS, in partnership with the National Center for American Indian Enterprise Development (NCAIED), will host Veteran Small Business Conference and Procurement Expo at the Ft. McDowell Resort & Casino, June 11-12, 2008. One in seven small businesses is owned by a veteran, and one in four veterans owns or has considered owning their own business. The federal government has a 3% set-aside for veteran-owned business, but is unable to meet the

quota. Gen. Maxon would like to see the State of Arizona legislate a similar set-aside for veterans. PIO Dave Hampton has created a media release to encourage veterans-owned business to register as such and take advantage of the incentives offered.

- The Arizona legislature has extended the session “until further notice.” The FY 09 budget must be done by July 1, 2008.
- The Governor has signed six bills affecting veterans and the military.

SB 1277 - task force; retraining disabled veterans: Establishes a task force under the Board of Regents to: research and collect information on programs to retrain disabled military veterans.

SB 1334 - compact; educational opportunity; military children: Create an interstate compact to facilitate the timely enrollment of children of active military families to ensure that they are not at a disadvantage because of difficulties in transferring school records from previous schools in other districts and states.

HB 2021 - enduring freedom extension: Extends the time for completion of the Enduring Freedom memorial to be placed in Wesley Bolin Plaza from August 2007 to December 31, 2013. (The dedication is planned for November 15th.)

HB 2213 - uniformed overseas voters; electronic transmittal: Allows absent uniformed service members and overseas voters to vote by early ballot using secure email.

HB 2249 - right of way; military procession: Allows organizations such as the Patriot Guard Riders to legally be a patriotic escort at a military member's or veteran's funeral or to escort a departing or returning military member if requested by the family.

- SB 1169 - military family relief; fund; committee is stalled in committee. The bill makes technical changes to the Military Family Relief Fund law to include assistance eligibility to parents of single service members or veterans wounded, injured, or contracting serious illnesses in line-of-duty. It would also authorize a Military Family Relief Fund sub-committee to meet without posting agenda 24-hours before meeting as required under Open Meeting Law in emergency circumstances to quickly disperse funding for military families to join their wounded/injured/ill family member.

Commissioner Fulkerson will draft a letter urging action on this bill to be sent to Senate President Tim Bee, Speaker of the House Jim Weiers, and sponsor Senator Marsha Arzberger.

- The Phoenix Suns have volunteered to pay the \$32,000 implementation fee for the Gold Star Plate. The bill will be amended to reflect the funding source and to establish a sub-account within the Veteran's Donation Fund to assist family members of service members killed with the Donation Fund portion of plates sold.
- The groundwork has been laid by the Veterans Medical Leadership Council (VMLC) to dedicate the 3rd Street extension north of Indian School Road in honor of Sylvestre Herrera. The status of that effort is undetermined.
- State budget cuts did not affect ADVS for FY 08, and the Governor has stated she anticipates the Department will not be affected in FY 09.
- Rep. Harry Mitchell's GI Bill legislation does not include the National Guard for non-middle east efforts such as safe-guarding our borders and airports.
- The Director gave an overview of income and expenditures involving the Veterans' Donation Fund. Commissioner Fredricks asked for a schedule of federal, state, and agency funding responsibilities for the State Veteran Home to be presented and discussed at the June meeting.
- Director Maxon advised that he has been in the public sector since 1972, including the military, and has not had the opportunity to spend the time with his family that he would like. To that end, he advised the Governor of his intention to retire and will do so at the end of the fiscal year, or effective July 1, 2008.

### ADVS Deputy Director Mike Klier

- The Donation Fund continues to benefit from the Arizona Veteran license plate, and the Freedom plate continues to climb.
- Donna Adams will be the ADVS support contact for the Advisory Commission.

### **Region 2 Meeting Review (Springerville)**

Chairman Dingwall suggested that issues raised by the public at the regional meetings are often those with a federal component, but the Commission should still be prepared to give guidance in those areas. Chairman Dingwall appointed a sub-committee to review the minutes of regional meetings to capture all public questions/comments and steps taken to satisfy the inquiry. The items will be entered into a data base for ease of use. Chairman Dingwall appointed

Commissioner Fulkerson  
Commissioner McKim

Commissioner Fredricks  
Vice Chairman Yamanouchi

Chairman Dingwall will contact the VA VISN 18 Director regarding a presence at the outreach meetings from the VA medical centers since many of the public concerns deal with the medical centers.

- “Support our Troops” license plate: ADVS PIO Dave Hampton advised that the bill has been held in the Transportation Committee and is dying. The Commissioners asked for a copy of the final letter that went from the Commission to the legislature regarding this bill.
- Research Council Recommendations: This item was tasked to Commissioner Ellis in March. He has prepared a letter suggesting that the Commission will use the recommendations to create a platform to measure legislation introduced to fulfill the recommendations of the Council. The letter was unanimously accepted, and signed by the Chairman to be sent to the Governor with a copy to the Director of ADVS. A copy of the letter will be sent to legislators, and a copy will be sent veterans’ service organization leaders by e-mail.
- VA matters: A letter was sent last year from the Commission to the Director of the Phoenix VAMC regarding an individual’s complaint of cultural insensitivity at an out-based clinic. There was no response from the VA and a second letter has been sent. By consensus, the Commission approved contacting the VISN Director if the issue goes unresolved.

There is concern that VA medical and benefits services are not available on the weekends in rural areas, especially in Native American Communities. Commissioner Fulkerson advised that she has had a level of success with support from laypeople to satisfy some of the needs, especially support for PTSD. Commissioner Fulkerson will investigate this further.

- A concern was raised in Springerville about preference points for veterans seeking employment with the State of Arizona. Veterans preference points are addressed in ARS § 38-492. Only those positions that are not exempt from the state merit system are eligible for preference points, and then only if there is an exam that yields a numeric score. The potential employee must pass the test in order to receive the points. Vice Chairman Yamanouchi will respond to the inquiry and include a copy of the statutes.
- Improving communication with VA services: Chairman Dingwall reiterated that the Commission should be prepared to address questions regarding federal programs, as well as state. An invitation will be sent to the representative VAMC for the next outreach meeting stressing the need for the VA presence at the meeting with a copy to the VISN director.

### **Commission’s Strategic Plan**

Commissioner Fredricks will forward the plan to support staff for distribution and action by the Commission at the June meeting.

### **Comments**

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- Commissioner Ellis suggested the next outreach meeting be held in Tuba City and a request be made for a tour of the reservation to get a clearer understanding of issues to be addressed.
- Commissioner Fredricks asked that the Arizona Veterans Hall of Fame be added as an action item for the June meeting to reaffirm ADVS's involvement.

A motion was made by Larry McKim to adjourn at 12:35 p.m., seconded and carried.

Donna Adams

Recorder